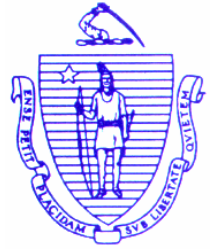




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**MAY 2, 2003**

**MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
PASSES NEW REGULATIONS FOR  
SCALLOPS, TRAWL MESH, LOBSTER, SCUP & STRIPED BASS.**

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At the May 1, 2003 monthly business meeting of the state's Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFC), new regulations were enacted affecting commercial lobster fishermen in Areas 2, 3 and outer Cape Cod, sea scallop hand harvesters, recreational and commercial striped bass fishermen, commercial scup fishermen and the trawl fishery. These issues were discussed at February 3-4 and April 14, 16 & 17 public hearings and will be in effect on May 23, 2003 (please note emergency regulations became effective on May 2, 2003).

- 1) **A 1 bushel (whole)/ 4 quarts (shucked meats) possession limit for the recreational scallop fishery was passed.** Hand harvesters of scallops with any quantities above this recreational limit will each be required to possess individual commercial permits endorsed for sea scallop diving. Out-of-state harvesters from states without reciprocal privileges will be prohibited from obtaining such an endorsement.  
  
These changes were based on a petition received by *Marine Fisheries* to amend current scallop regulations as a means to better manage this fishery and create licensing reciprocity between states' of concern (MA & ME).
- 2) **A 6 ½" trawl minimum mesh size for the cod-end was passed (6" throughout the remainder of the net).** This action amends current stricter regulations that require a 6 ½" trawl minimum mesh size throughout the entire net. This new regulation complements the current federal regulation.
- 3) **The 3 11/32" minimum size for lobsters in LCMA 2, currently in place through emergency action, was permanently adopted along with a scheduled increase to 3 3/8" on July 1, 2003 (an increase to 3 11/32" on July 1, 2003 for LCMA 3 and OCC was previously approved).** Although this is a compliance issue with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fishery management plan, there was general support for this measure at the public hearings as the Area 2 Lobster Conservation Management Team was actively involved in calling for such increased measures to address the drastic decline in stock conditions.

- 4) **For the striped bass recreational fishery, a 2 fish daily possession limit for the recreational striped bass fishery was approved (minimum size to remain at 28").**  
The decision to allow two fish at the 28" minimum size versus a slot limit was made as:
- this measure meets the resource conservation objectives of Amendment 6;
  - most of the fish composing the "second fish harvest" would fall below 40 inches where most population abundance resides,
  - it will be simpler to enforce and for anglers to comply with;
  - and finally, it would be consistent with regulations in most other states.
- 5) **The following measures to amend the commercial scup summer fishery period regulations were taken:**
- Weir set-aside increased to 225,000-lbs;
  - 100-lb. possession limit for fishermen fishing by hook-and-line or pots during the open black sea bass season prior to July 1;
  - August 1 start date for the directed fishery;
  - directed fishery possession limit increased to 400-lbs;
  - and Friday was added to the current no-fishing days of Saturday and Sunday.
- 6) **Emergency action (effective May 2, 2003) was taken to adopt a May 1, 2003 control date for the commercial striped bass fishery after which any person issued a new commercial fisherman's permit endorsed for striped bass fishing will not be assured of future access to or participation in this fishery if a management regime is developed and implemented that limits the number of participants in this fishery.**
- 7) **Finally, the Director extended the moratorium on lobster license transfers and restrictions on issuance of commercial offshore lobster permits enacted on February 6, 2003.**
- 8) **The proposed *Marine Fisheries* effort control plan will be aired at public hearings on May 27<sup>th</sup> in Gloucester and May 29<sup>th</sup> in Taunton.** Official public hearing notices will be published shortly in the Massachusetts Register and local newspapers and will be available on the *Marine Fisheries* website.

For more information please contact *Marine Fisheries* at 617.626.1520  
or visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).